DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 590 IR 053 188

AUTHOR Vavrek, Bernard
TITLE Assessing the Information Needs of Rural Pennsylvanians.
INSTITUTION Clarion Univ. of Pennsylvania. Coll. of Library Science.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 42p.; Cover title: "Assessing Rural Information Needs: Pennsylvania Rural Libraries."
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Development; *Information Needs; *Library Services; *Needs Assessment; *Public Libraries; Questionnaires; *Rural Areas; *Users (Information); Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT

The results of a survey of rural public libraries in Pennsylvania are reported in narrative form, supplemented with tables and graphs. The report is based on the responses of 1,053 library users of 124 rural libraries (out of a sample of 131). Concerned with the users' perceptions of the public library, the first section presents data on reasons for using the library, frequency of library use, ratings of library services, differences in information needs based on gender of library patrons, and the willingness of patrons to pay for library services. The second section provides data on the top six daily information requirements of patrons and the extent to which the library meets them, the effect of community involvement on information needs, and the use of information sources other than the library. The third section considers the role of the rural public library in supporting community development efforts. Recommendations outlined in the fourth section highlight the importance of the library making available information about local communities, informing the public about library resources and services in a more systematic fashion, nurturing the support of community opinion leaders, and encouraging women--as a lobbying group--to support the library before municipal authorities responsible for library funding. Also recommended are an examination of other players in the infrastructure of information in Pennsylvania and of the process by which the general public goes about locating information and deciding on alternative resources. Appended are a roster of the research team, the survey instrument, and the raw data collected in the study. (12 references) (GL)

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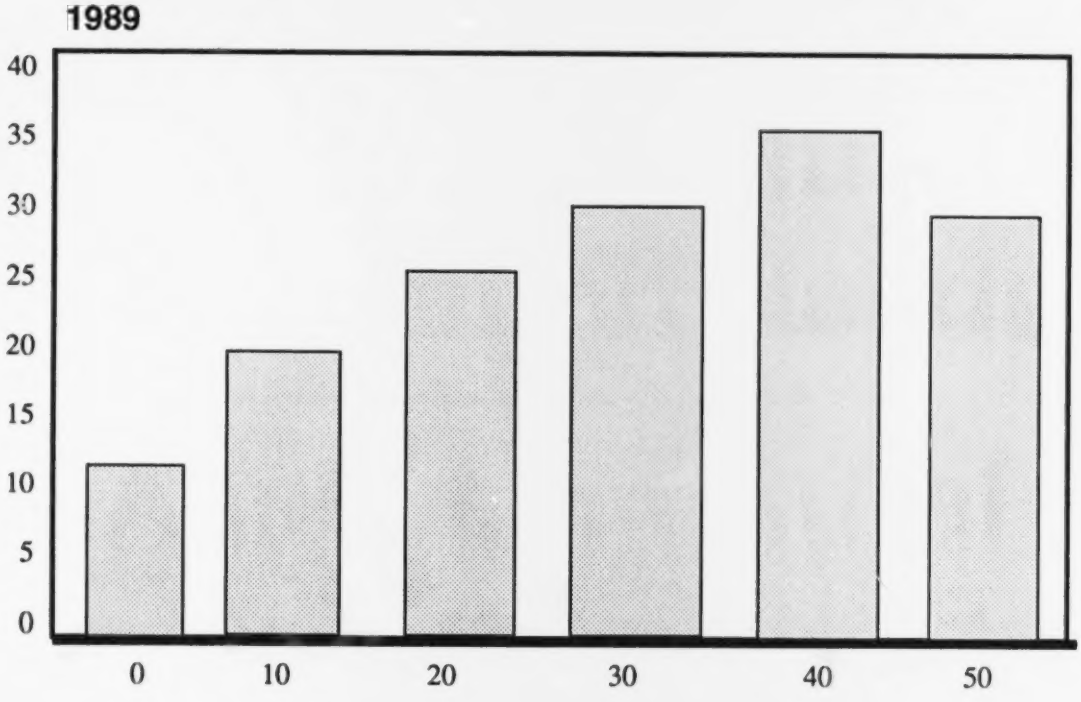
Assessing Rural Information Needs



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Assessing the Information Needs of Rural Pennsylvanians

by

Bernard Vavrek

Coordinator, Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship

College of Library Science
Clarion University of Pennsylvania
1990

Acknowledgements

The purpose of this document is to report on the project, "Assessing the Information Needs of Rural Pennsylvanians." In reaching this juncture, the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship wishes to express appreciation to the Honorable David R. Wright (D-63) whose imagination was responsible for the establishment of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, and, in turn, enabled the present research activity to be organized. Further, thanks are directed toward the staff of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, who provided support and encouragement. Finally, this project would not have been completed without the active and professional commitment of the research team whose role was central to this study. The names of the individuals composing the research team and those graduate assistants in the College of Library Science, Clarion University, who also participated in this project, appear in the appendix of this document.

Bernard Vavrek
Project Director
1990

Executive Summary

* Statistically, library usage is no different in rural areas of under 2,500 people than places of 2,501-25,000 residents.

* The public library is supported by a core of "influential" people, who are viewed as such because of their reading habits, information needs, and involvement in community activities.

* Eight out of ten library clients are women.

* The average female library user is 44 years old and identifies herself as a homemaker.

* Women have greater information needs than men and rely more on the library to meet those requirements.

* The typical male client is 51 years old and is retired.

* High school education, is the highest level of schooling cited by the average rural public library user.

* Weekly visits to the library is the pattern followed by 67% of the clients.

* The most frequent reason for library use (51%) was for best sellers.

* Six books/month are read by the average library user, and eighty-two percent of those surveyed read magazines regularly.

* There is a gap between the daily information needs of rural residents and the ability of the library to satisfy those needs.

* In order of importance, information about best sellers, local news, national news, health/medical services, programs of education, and decisions of local government are described as daily information needs.

* The library is viewed as most important in providing information on best sellers, reference books, how-to-do-it topics, hobby/crafts, national news, and health/medical services.

* In addition to the library, clients obtain information, respectively, from personal books/magazines, newspapers, TV, other libraries, and word of mouth.

* Clients belonging to community organizations have information needs greater than those not participating in community activities and are more dependent on the library to satisfy those needs.

* Library clients view the library as highly important to the well-being of the community.

* Ninety-two percent of those surveyed believe that the library provided what they needed on the day of their visit.

* Fewer than half of those surveyed indicate a willingness to pay a fee for services received.

* If forced to pay a fee, 45% would pay less than $1.00.

* A larger library building, along with being open more hours, and having more materials, are suggestions made by clients for improvement.

The Role of this Study

In 1978, the College of Library Science at Clarion University organized the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship. Eight years later, the Small Library Development Center was established. Both enterprises are directly concerned with the development of library services in Pennsylvania. Given the nature of Pennsylvania's rural population (Heasley, Price 1988, 11) and the propensity of public libraries to be located in nonmetropolitan areas, it is surprising that this investigation was not accomplished at least a decade earlier. Perhaps, it is better understood in the context that no other state has seen it appropriate to conduct a survey of rural library use.

What highlights this study, is not its overall ability to facilitate answers to elusive questions, but that it is an initial effort to deal with access to information in rural Pennsylvania. "Efforts to improve the rural information infrastructure must be predicated upon the knowledge of what infrastructure exists, and how it is used by large and small scale users. At present this knowledge is sketchy at best, and the need for systematic research is great" (Dillman, Beck 1987, 45).

The overriding goals of this project are to enable the rural public library to become a more efficient disseminator of information and to enhance its role in the development of rural Pennsylvania. It is clear that if Pennsylvania is to continue to survive economically its future is directly related to maximizing its resources. The public library is one of these jewels.

Methodology

Using the latest Directory of Pennsylvania Public Libraries as the source, a sample of (n=131) rural public libraries was drawn. This represents approximately one-fourth of the public libraries in the Commonwealth. Rural was defined as a place no larger than 25,000 residents, and not within a Metropolitan Statistical Area. In November, 1988, 20 questionnaires were mailed to each target library with instructions to insure an even distribution among adult clients during the hours that the library was opened. Effecting the surveying were limited staffing patterns and variable library hours. Parenthetically, not to be forgotten in the statistics of reporting, however, was the spirit of cooperation of those participating in this investigation. By the end of March, 1989, (n=1503) surveys were returned from (n=124) libraries.

A copy of the survey instrument and raw data from this investigation may be found as an appendix to this document.

Perceptions of the Public Library

Library Use

All institutions have images. The difficulty has been, however, that not all rural librarians or those associated with rural libraries have taken the opportunity to study how they are viewed by the public. Research conducted by the Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship has shown consistently that no more than 30% of the libraries studied have conducted community surveys within the last five years (Vavrek 1987, 24).

It is relatively clear from the present investigation that there are differences among the perceptions of those responsible for library services and clients of rural libraries. Current library practice, e.g., champions the principle that providing information is one of the key elements of the modern library. This convention has existed since the nineteenth century. Moreover, the document, Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries, promotes as one of its goals: "The library actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents in their pursuit of job-related and personal interests" (McClure 1987, 38). To confirm this, 92%(339) of the rural librarians recently studied agreed that their libraries were pursuing this role (Vavrek 1989, 407).

The dichotomy of perceived roles suggested in this present study may be observed from the first figure, on the next page.

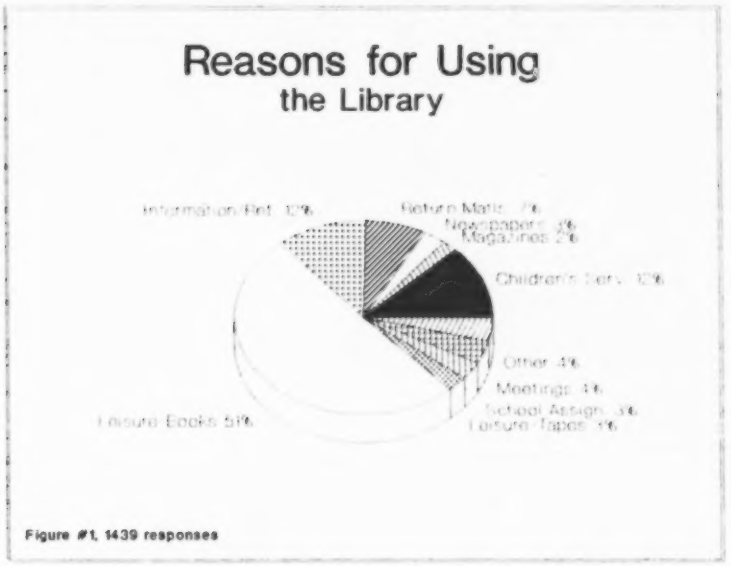


Figure #1, 1439 responses

While "leisure" was not defined for the respondents and, obviously, constitutes a variety of things, its effect on library use was surprising. A literal interpretation of Figure #1 might lead one to the characterization of the library not as the community's information center, but only a place to obtain books. This would be unfair for a variety of reasons. It is first important to remember that the average overall annual budget of the libraries being analyzed is approximately $67,000. If one considers only libraries in communities of fewer than 2,500 people, the budget average is closer to $37,000. Consider, then, the variety of services being provided with what must described as "frugal" financial support. What other community agency provides this array of services? Further, the central role of books in the public library is part of its tradition since the middle of the nineteenth century (Harris 1975, 20). While our society has created an age of information, or more correctly is a product of it, not all of its institutions have "escaped" tradition. It is also possible that a type of natural selection

of the library species is taking place with community libraries continuing to maintain a popular reading function rather than choosing a life in the age of information. But the context may not be a matter of choice, rather than an inability to compete because of the relative economics of doing so. The library is now in a posture of asking itself about its future direction: building upon the role of leisure reading or diversifying?

Notwithstanding the conflict over roles, Figure #2 provides another positive perception of rural libraries based upon clients recurring use.

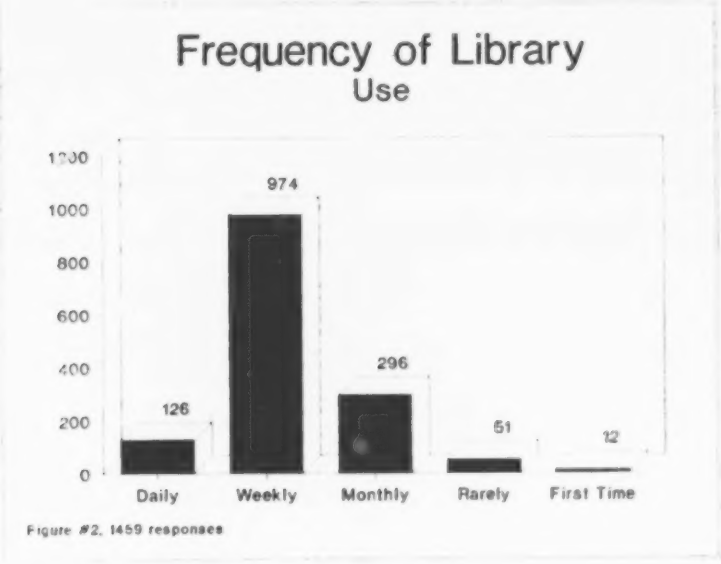


Figure #2, 1459 responses

Nine percent of the clients surveyed come to the library daily, 67% visit weekly, and 20% monthly. Interestingly, a cross tabulation of use frequency by those belonging to community organizations (survey question three with question 21) indicates that of the 1383 respondents analyzed, 66%(523) belonging to community organizations use the library weekly and 53%(66) frequent the library daily. Parenthetically, this is one of the first suggestions of the important role played by community "influentials."

Rating the Library

Another view of the library's relative role in the community can be discerned from Figure #3, which suggests the positive attitude clients have toward their favorite institution.

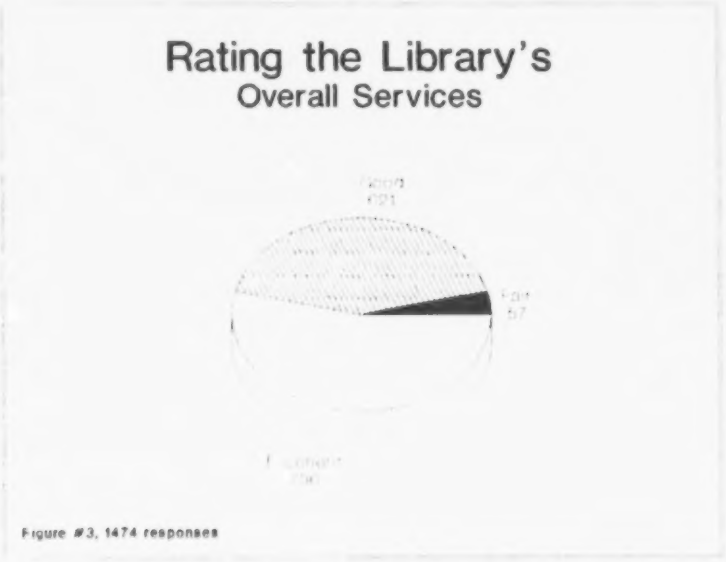


Figure #3, 1474 responses

Of those surveyed, 54% rated overall library services as excellent, 42% felt that "things" were good, and only four percent rated services as poor or fair. Allowing for the fact that this investigation was conducted among individuals who chose the library for its services, it would be surprising if the level of satisfaction were negative. This does not diminish the attitude of positive satisfaction generated by the clients.

The Female Client

The next illustration, showing the gender orientation of rural library users, is provocative enough to demand the attention of the remainder of this document.

Historically, patterns of public library use have shown a propensity of female users. None, however, has shown the marked contrast as this present study. As a reminder, though, none has focused on a strictly rural clientele before.

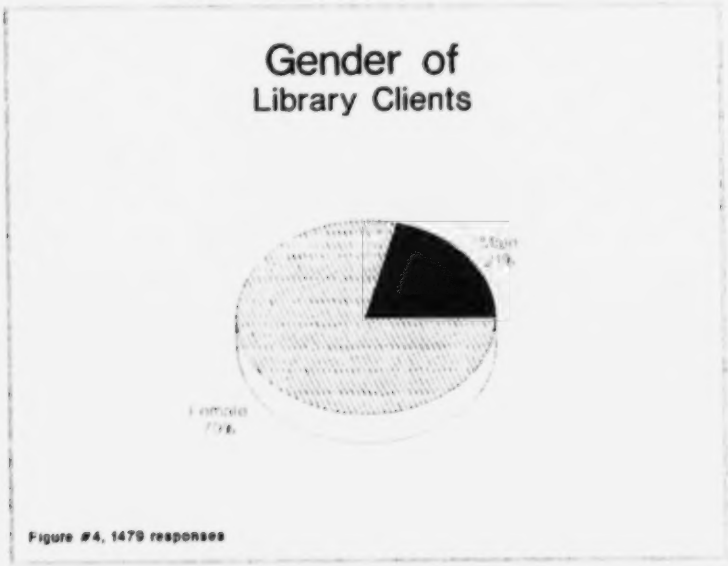


Figure #4, 1479 responses

Although it may be possible that the disproportionate "female factor" may have been caused by some flaw in the distribution of the questionnaires, it is an irrelevant concern given the fact that women clients seem to have greater information needs quite different from their male counterparts and utilize the library to meet those requirements. Table 1 illustrates these significant differences.

FIGURE 1 - Significant Differences of Information Needs and Reliance on Library by Women--Based on Wilcoxon Two Sample Test

Subject	Need*	Library Use**
Hobby/craft	p=0.0000	p=0.0001
Getting/changing jobs	p=0.0000	p=0.0000
Local community events	p=0.0000	
Programs of education	p=0.0000	
Local social services	p=0.0000	p=0.0012
Best sellers	p=0.0000	p=0.0000
How to do it/reference		p=0.0028
Legal matters		p=0.0034
Programs of education		p=0.0000
Health/medical services		p=0.0006

*In each case, women reported higher information needs than men

**In each case, women reported greater reliance on the library than men

The only relationship in which a male client had a greater need for a type of information pertained to "Local business/investment. But he had no greater probability of using the library for this type of information that his female associate. It probably would now not come as a surprise to note that female clients rate the library as being more important to the well-being of the community than men (p=0.0050)

Beyond the statistical evidence suggested by this present investigation, it is interesting to speculate further on the predominate role of the female client. Among the additional reasons proposed are the following:

1. Rural women in Pennsylvania continue to work in the home and are available to use the library when it is open for service. Parenthetically, it should be noted, that while 12% of the respondents indicated a use of the library for children's services, female use is largely an individualized matter, e.g., not fetching things for others;

2. Women read more than men;

3. Men are more in need of literacy help than women;

4. In Pennsylvania, more women are now enrolled in programs of higher education than men;

5. Women are more library literate than men;

6. Because of the manner in which it advertises itself, men may perceive the library more as a place for women; and,

7. Women may feel more comfortable using the library because the library staff person tends to be female.

While waiting for future studies to substantiate the above, a more immediate policy concern awaits attention. In traditional rural Pennsylvania communities, will the preponderance of library use by women provide a further rationale for male dominated authorities to declare the library a "nice" place but hardly critical to the well-being of the municipality, and not worthy of decent funding? Or, is the potential lobbying effect of women such that if properly directed it would create volatile and dynamic change. Given the fact that rural Pennsylvania is constantly changing and more women will undoubtedly take on other working roles in addition to homemaker, the lobbying potential is enormous.

Placing a Value on the Library

A final indication of the manner in which the library is perceived, at least for this analysis, can be seen from Figures #5 and #6.

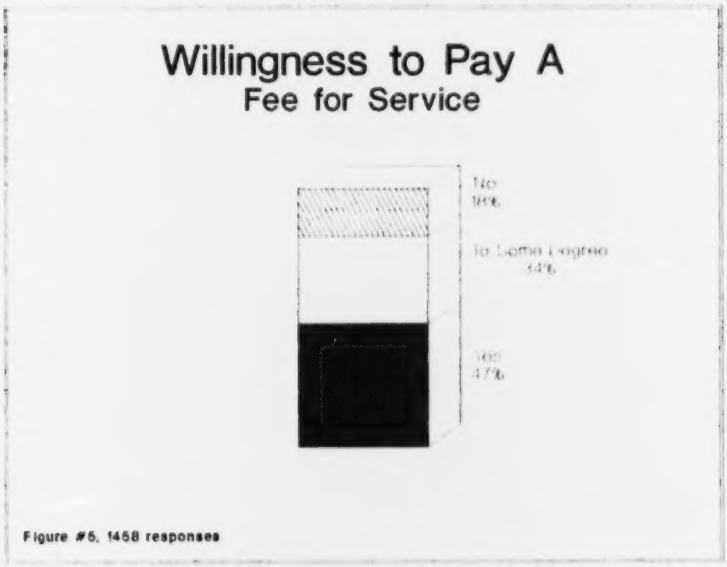


Figure #5, 1458 responses

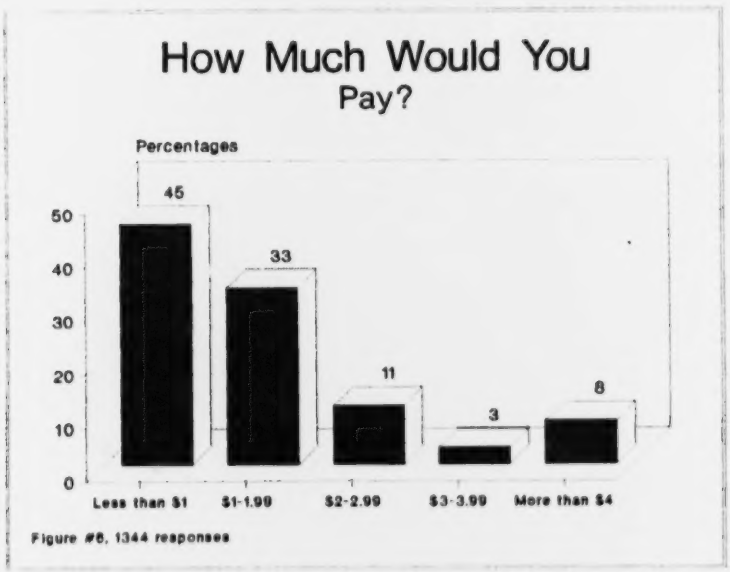


Figure #6, 1344 responses

The intent in asking individuals about their willingness to pay a fee for library service was not with the notion that this would be a viable alternative to municipal funding--there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this is not workable--but rather to determine a perception of value that clients assign to the benefits they receive at the time of their visit. While Figure #5 suggests the general disinclination toward paying a fee, the results in Figure #6 were based on the survey question: "If you had to pay a fee..." Perhaps the 45%(609) that answered, "Less than $1," does not manifest itself as an entirely favorable response, but if one projects this over 52 visits (since weekly use is the average) the circumstance must be viewed positively. Added to this are another 33%(440) of the clients who would be willing to pay up to $2 for service contact.

In conclusion, while rural libraries are at the literal crossroads of determining future philosophies of service, it must be stated that this previous analysis suggests a clientele that is both supportive and reliant on Pennsylvania's institutions. The lack of suitable funding continues to be a central concern, however.

Assessing Information Needs

Some comment has already been made regarding the information needs of the clients studied, in Figure #1. The preponderance of leisure reading (and the reliance on books) has not been previously recognized by researchers or librarians. It would be short-sighted, however, to focus on this element to the exclusion of others. Even at the risk of being repetitious, it is essential to note that the typical rural library is expected to play many roles. It is significant, however, that there is a mismatch in what the library community perceives to be the function of the library in relation to the clients actual use.

Other efforts at assessing information requirements are discernible in Figure #7. Clients were asked to rate their daily information needs on a scale of (1) - (5), with (5) being the most important. The top six needs are identified below. As an aside, "How to do it/reference" finished as a close seventh choice (n=320).

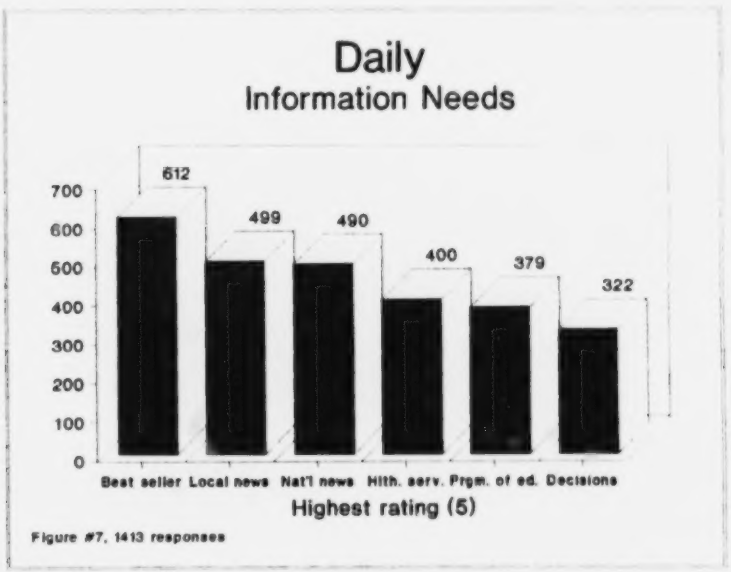


Figure #7, 1413 responses

To put the responses in Figure #7 in the context of this investigation, all of the possible categories from which respondents might have chosen are listed below:

Hobby/crafts
Action of govt officials
Legal matters
Local news
Current decision of local government
Getting or changing jobs
Programs of education
Best sellers
Videocassettes
Others
Local business/investment
How to do it/reference
Local history/genealogy
Health/medical services
Matters of self-improvement
Local community events
Local social services
Local ordinances/laws
Computers
National news

In contrast to an identification of daily information needs, Figure #8 illustrates the extent to which the library meets those needs, at least based on the respondents top six choices. One should be made aware of the fact that the category of "Reference books" was added to the available selections in Figure #8, suggesting the importance of the library in providing this type of material.

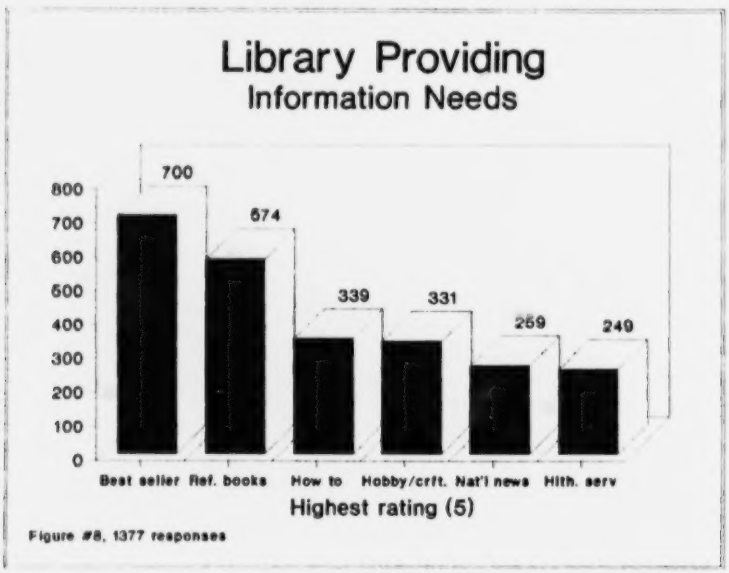


Figure #8, 1377 responses

Interestingly, only three of the six categories in Figure #7--"Best sellers," "National news," and "Health services" also appear in Figure #8, and with the exception of "Best sellers," disproportionately. As mentioned previously, "How to do it/reference" qualifies also as a match by virtue of the (n=320) clients who voted for it as a daily information need.

The Community Influentials

Shown, also, in Figures #7 and #8, is the importance of news information among the respondents surveyed. This situation is described by (Roper 1988, 94) as characteristic of influential Americans, 92% of whom read a newspaper on a daily basis. There are additional reasons to believe that library use is affected by influential rural people, i.e., community leaders. Roper states, e.g., that influential Americans are voracious readers. While this description was not limited to those who read books, the present investigation indicates that the typical client read six books/month. This compares interestingly with the Book Industry Study Group which reported that only ten percent of the American population reads four books/month--the largest number (Yankelovich 1978, 107).

Further related to the concept of influential Americans, is the significance of community involvement, i.e., belonging to organizations, associations, etc. The present investigation discovered that 54%(759) of the respondents surveyed participated in community or social organizations. Additionally, members of community organizations had a greater need for information than nonmembers and were more likely to use the library for their information needs than nonmembers. Table 2 shows these differences.

TABLE 2 - Significant Differences of Information Needs and Reliance on Library Between members of Community Organizations and Nonmembers--Based on Wilcoxon Two Sample Test

Subject	Need*	Library Use**
Hobby/craft	p=0.0097	p=0.0027
Action of gov. officials	p=0.0003	
How to do it/reference	p=0.0041	
Local history/genealogy	p=0.0036	p=0.0000
Decisions of local gov.	p=0.0000	
Local community events	p=0.0000	
Programs of education	p=0.0000	p=0.0018
Local social services	p=0.0009	
Local ordinances/laws	p=0.0002	p=0.0088
Reference books		p=0.0002
Other information		p=0.0002

*In each case, the community organization members reported higher informational needs than non-members

**In each case, community organization members reported greater reliance on the library to meet these information needs

The implications of the above Table are rather startling. Although it may not be surprising that members of community organizations require information dealing with the "Decisions of local government," it is disconcerting to consider the level of probability that the rural public library will not be utilized for those types of information. The explanation is really not too elusive. The control of current, ephemeral data is the most labor intensive type with which to deal. And because of staff limitations, an emphasis has not been placed on its organization. But the question is really one of priority, not any inherent unwillingness to perform. At the same time,

there has been little emphasis within Pennsylvania, including colleges of library science, to overcome this possible training deficiency. In addressing the present limitations of accessing timely information, one is not suggesting an abandonment of leisure reading, but rather adding to that readership a marketing segment that apparently is most important to the leadership of the community and the future of the library. Parenthetically, one wonders to what extent individuals belonging to community organizations also belong to friends of the library groups--a future concern!

As an extension of the above paragraph, it is interesting to note that, while describing public library use by community influentials has not really been a "hot topic," the Public library in the United States included the comment:

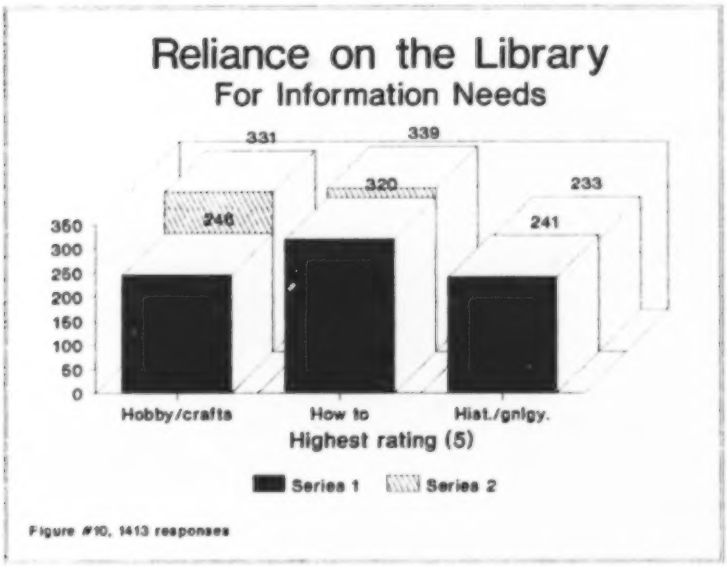
> For the public library's users, although they include persons of all kinds, degrees, and conditions, are not a cross section of the general population. As a group, they have more schooling, have larger home libraries, read more magazines, see more movies, and listen to more of the serious radio programs than the average of all adults. They contain more than a numerical proportion of those who serve voluntarily on all levels as leaders of opinion and culture in their communities (Leigh 1950, 49).

And, more recently, "Library users tend to be confident people, opinion leaders who are actively involved in their communities. They are more likely than non-users to agree that they like to be considered leaders and participate in activities like community projects, clubs, church, and volunteer work" (Doremus 1987, 4).

What has been described previously pertaining to the information needs of community leaders and the inability of the library to meet those needs, is also generally true of the entire population being surveyed. Figure #9 shows the dilemma with the use of selected examples. Respondents daily needs (Series 1) are contrasted with their reliance on the library for fulfilling those requirements (Series 2).

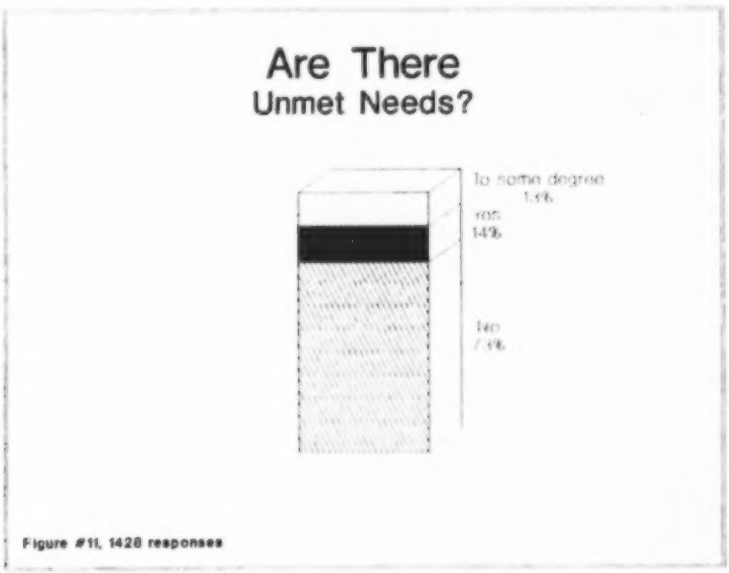
Figure 9, 1413 responses

To clarify the representation in Figure #9, e.g., 322 respondents indicated that the "Decisions of local government" was a priority need, but only 151 relied on the library for this information. In fairness, however, there are categories of information--in addition to "Best Sellers"--that the rural library is providing quite adequately. These are "Hobby/crafts," "How to do it/reference," and "Local history/genealogy," emphasizing the library's popular role. Figure #10 shows these relationships. (Series 1) represents daily information needs, and (Series 2) indicates the degree to which the library meets those needs.



Resources Other Than the Library

While 92%(1356) of the respondents indicated that the library provided the needed service on the day of the visit, 27%(381) felt that there were information needs not met, Figure #11.



The data in Figure #11 hardly represent a great revelation given the previous discussion in this document. It is also important to remember that the library's ability to manage 73% of the requests is helped by the fact that over half of these are for leisure reading material. This reminder is not with the intent of denigrating the popular reading function in rural libraries, but only as a matter of perspective. Relative to Figure #11, it is significant to report that 18%(90) of those indicating unmet needs provided the request for "more specific reference books" at the top of their wish list. This is not surprising in that research among rural librarians over the last eight years has shown the same deficiency of resources. Apparently, the situation has not improved (Vavrek 1980, 576).

As a final comment on assessing information needs, respondents were asked to identify the resources that they utilized in addition to the library to locate data. In Figure #12, the series legends refer to the clients first, second, and third choices.

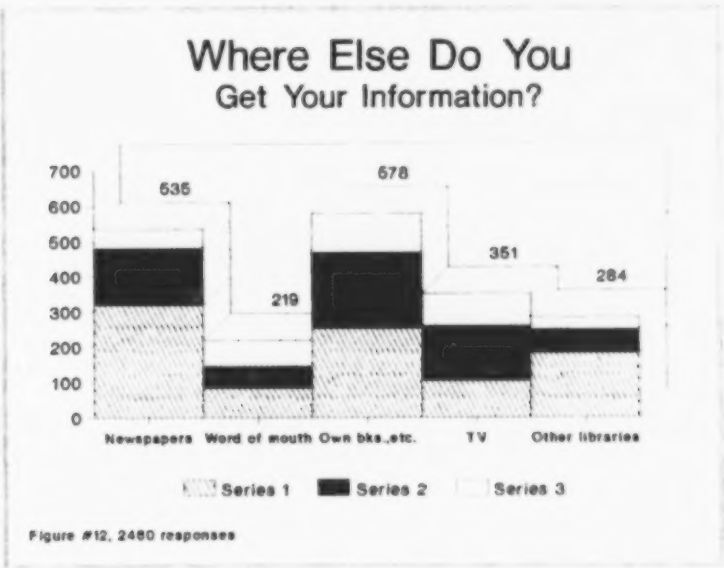


Figure #12, 2460 responses

The use of "newspapers", in Figure #12, is of interest and particularly the minimal reliance on "word of mouth" as a strategy. Perhaps, another reason for the rural library's slow response to the information age is the continued utilization of personal contacts as the prime means of organizational communications, while the public relies on other means.

In conclusion, it is really not too complicated to understand the rural public library's penchant for providing popular information as opposed to, e.g., "Decisions of local government." This latter requirement means access to ephemeral kinds of data--council minutes, reports, etc. The library's role continues to be one more closely related to managing books. The inadequacy of library budgets and limited staffing are significantly contributive, in addition. But the problem is not totally explainable by an inadequacy of support. Most library communities have not as yet surveyed their constituencies to determine what role or roles the library should emphasize. As a consequence, the rural public library continues to exist in an environment of "institutional anomie."

Rural Libraries and Community Development

The final portion of this narrative deals with whether or not the public library meets the needs of its constituencies in supporting community development. By using the following definition:

> Community development can be viewed as citizens and a host of different organizations working to improve the community. This is rarely one unified effort, since community developers seldom work with the total community. Instead, they work with citizens, ad hoc groups, elected and appointed officials, special-interest groups, and formal and informal organizations (Robinson, Clifford 1974, preface).

it must be stressed that the typical rural library is directly supporting community development. There is a great deal which is yet to be accomplished, however.

This investigation attempted to indicate that women--who are major supporters of the public library--and members of community organization have greater need for information than their counterparts, and rely on the library more heavily to meet those needs. Further, this study labored to build a case suggesting that over half of the clients investigated compose a core of influential Americans who can provide a leadership role in supporting the library. In those areas of information that are most closely identified with community developmental needs, e.g., "Action of government officals," "Current decisions of local governments," etc., the rural library's support is deficient. Further, it appears that to a majority of clients, the public library is perceived as a place that caters only to leisure reading.

Therefore, based on the above discussion, it is clear that there is a pressing need to develop educational programs and training materials which will make constituents aware of overall library resources, and prompt library staff members to

take a more active role in the organization and dissemination of information that directly relates to community development. The potential is great!

Recommendations

* Environmental scanning and long-range planning are prerequisites in those communities where they have been neglected.

* Library staff members must make a further effort to collect and make available information about their community.

* Library personnel must make an additional effort to inform the public about services and resources in a more systematic fashion--as opposed to word of mouth.

* More interest must be shown in those influential people who are community opinion leaders. Their support of the library must be nurtured.

* Women--as a lobbying group--must be encouraged to support the library before municipal authorities who are responsible for the library's funding.

* There are more communities under 2,500 residents in Pennsylvania than in any other state in the nation. An average annual budget of $37,000, however, directly limits the rural public library from being a major player as a community information center.

* This investigation was a first step in identifying the infrastructure of information in rural communities. It is essential that the Center for Rural Pennsylvania be encouraged to maintain its support to further scruitny of this phenomenon. To this end, two future projects are suggested:

1. An examination of what other agencies, in addition to the public library, are players in the infrastructure of information in Pennsylvania; and,

2. How does the general public go about locating information and deciding on alternative resources?

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Appendix A

Roster of Research Team and Graduate Assistants

Research Team

Daryl Heasley, Director, Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, The Pennsylvania State University

David Hill, Community Resource Agent, Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University

Thomas Hipple, Librarian, St. Mary's Public Library

Pamela Hufnagel, Assistant Professor, Health and Human Development, DuBois Campus, The Pennsylvania State University

Mike Jaugstetter, Consultant Librarian, Clarion District Library Association

Bernard Vavrek, Coordinator, Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, College of Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Advisors

Joseph Grunenwald, Dean, College of Business Administration, Clarion University of Pennsylvania

John McLain, Professor, Emeritus, Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Secretary

Nancy Harriger

Graduate Assistants

Douglas Anderson
Diane Brigham
James Buksar
Kimberly Curtis
Kirk Doran
Barry Gray
Susan Holloran
Jackie Schmitt
Maureen Wolfgarth

Appendix B

LIBRARY SURVEY

Q.1 On a day-to-day basis, how important is it to you to have information on the following topics?

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	bl
Hobby/crafts	275	227	376	258	246	121
Local business/investment	469	289	313	169	98	165
Action of govt officials	303	224	326	266	206	178
How to do it/reference	175	173	342	340	320	153
Legal matters	445	289	328	171	110	160
Local history/genealogy	286	257	334	254	241	131
Local news	134	165	244	327	499	134
National news	147	117	270	341	490	138
Health/medical services	126	147	345	346	400	139
Current decisions of local government	205	202	310	318	322	146
Matters of self-improvement	142	167	419	343	287	145
Getting or changing jobs	471	230	275	193	150	184
Local community events	144	178	406	332	309	134
Programs of education	131	146	311	375	379	161
Local social services	236	243	372	291	205	156
Best sellers	137	123	262	279	612	90
Local ordinances/laws	224	256	345	276	232	170
Videocassettes	384	216	304	223	208	168
Computers	494	236	265	155	158	195
Others	53	10	20	27	84	1309

1=least important
Percentage of those who actually responded

Q.2 What do you think should be the most important goal of this library?

		Frequency	%
a.	Sponsor programs	20	1
b.	To provide information	795	56
c.	Services for children	193	14
d.	To provide a quiet place	32	2
e.	Leisure materials (books, mag.)	378	27
f.	Leisure materials (tapes, etc.)	10	1
	No response	74	

Q.3 How often do you come to this library?

		Frequency	%
a.	Daily	126	9
b.	Weekly	974	67
c.	Monthly	296	20
d.	Rarely	51	4
e.	First time today	12	1
	No response	44	

Q.4 What was the major reason for coming to the library today?

		Frequency	%
a.	Children's services/materials	177	12
b.	Magazines	28	2
c.	Newspapers	42	3
d.	Return materials	106	7
e.	Information/reference	166	12
f.	Leisure materials--print--books	727	51
g.	Leisure materials--nonprint	37	3
h.	School assignment	43	3
i.	Photocopying	8	1
j.	Browsing	12	1
k.	Tutoring/instructional services	5	<1
l.	Heating/air conditioning	15	1
m.	Place to relax	18	1
n.	Place to hold meeting	54	4
o.	Other	1	<1
	No response or miscode	64	

Q.5 Did this library provide what you needed today?

		Frequency	%
a.	Yes	1356	92
b.	No	24	2
c.	To some degree	89	6
	Blank or miscode	34	

Q.6 Was your reason for coming to the library today typical of why you usually come to the library?

		Frequency	%
a.	Yes	1184	81
b.	No	105	7
c.	To some degree	168	12
	No response or miscode	46	

Q.7 If you answered "no" or "to some degree," what was different about your reason for coming to this library today?

		Frequency	%
a.	Lack of time for typical usage	32	11
b.	Change in materials selected	189	68
c.	Meeting	11	4
d.	Study	3	1
e.	Other	31	11
	Missing or miscode	1237	

Most people were routed around this item

Q.8 Would you be willing to pay a fee for the library services that you received today?

		Frequency	%
a.	Yes	692	47
b.	No	268	18
c.	To some degree	498	34
	No response or miscode	45	

Q.9 If you had to pay a fee for the services that you received today, how much would you be willing to pay?

		Frequency	%
a.	Less than $1.00	609	45
b.	$1.00-$1.99	440	33
c.	$2.00-$2.99	151	11
d.	$3.00-$3.99	40	3
e.	More than $4.00	104	8
	No response or miscode	159	

Q.10 How important is this library to you in providing information on:

	Frequency					
	1	2	3	4	5	bl
Matters of self improvement	254	179	368	294	236	172
Local business/investment	495	299	302	128	70	209
Local social services	368	290	362	164	97	222
Best sellers	127	83	192	275	700	126
Action of govt officials	398	248	326	195	139	197
Hobby/crafts	228	167	307	305	331	165
Videocassettes	483	194	240	186	189	211
Local history/genealogy	261	233	339	239	233	198
Getting or changing jobs	514	231	262	165	105	226
Reference books	101	90	240	326	574	172
Computers	608	186	218	131	138	222
How to do it/reference	189	150	326	298	339	201
Local ordinances/laws	372	284	346	163	115	223
Legal matters	431	295	303	161	96	217
Local news	332	215	284	238	233	201
National news	321	205	285	245	259	188
Programs of education	232	177	332	290	176	196
Health/medical services	230	202	344	275	249	203
Current decision of local government	361	281	324	173	151	213
Other	61	15	11	21	83	1312

Q.11 Do you feel you have information needs which cannot be met at this library?

		Frequency	%
a.	Yes	196	14
b.	No	1047	73
c.	To some degree	185	13
	No response or miscode	75	

Q.12 If you answered "yes" or "to some degree," list up to three of these unmet information needs.

	Frequency			
	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
More specific reference books	69	12	9	90
Religious materials	10	4	3	17
Medical/health	22	7	1	30
Self-help/self-instruction	30	10	3	43
Science/technology	16	7	2	25
Genealogy	8	1	0	9
National newspapers	5	3	2	10
Better periodicals/more periodicals	22	15	6	43
Current politics/current events	11	6	3	20
History	16	5	2	23
Best sellers	5	7	3	15
Science fiction	3	4	2	9
Career information	5	2	0	7
Online systems	7	1	2	10
Other	77	44	27	148
No response	1195	1375	1438	

Four people listed four needs. They would add one to the counts for "periodicals" and "online systems" and two to "other."

Q.13 How quickly are you able to obtain the materials that you need at this library?

		Frequency	%
a.	That day	791	56
b.	Within a week	463	33
c.	Within 2 weeks	126	9
d.	Longer than 2 weeks	26	2
	No response	97	

Q.14 If you wanted to change one thing about this library, what would it be?

	Frequency	%
Larger building	256	31
Larger selection of materials	111	13
More current materials	48	6
Open more hours	125	15
Open fewer hours	2	<1
Quiet area needed	16	2
More science fiction	9	1

Q.14 Continued	Frequency	%
More newspapers	2	<1
Have meeting rooms	5	1
More microfilm readers	1	<1
More non-fiction	8	1
Expand reference collection	20	3
Video availability	22	3
More recorded music	6	2
Have computers	16	2
Make it easier to find materials	17	2
Handicapped access to all levels	7	1
Better floor plan	15	2
Large print materials	2	<1
Other	138	17
No response	677	

Q.15 How important is this library to the well-being of your community?

		Frequency	%
a.	Not important	8	1
b.	Somewhat important	30	2
c.	Important	300	20
d.	Highly important	746	51
e.	Critically important	386	26
	No response or miscode	33	

Q.16 In overall services, rate this library.

		Frequency	%
a.	Poor	6	<1
b.	Fair	51	4
c.	Good	621	42
d.	Excellent	796	54
	No response or miscode	29	

Q.17 In addition to the library, where else do you regularly get information to answer your questions?

		1st	2nd	3rd	Total
a.	Newspapers	319	161	55	545
b.	Word of mouth	83	63	73	225
c.	Professionals	34	35	31	104

Q.17		1st	2nd	3rd	Total
d.	Own books, magazines,etc.	251	218	109	584
e.	T.V.	105	153	93	358
f.	Other libraries	183	64	37	288
g.	Govt. agencies non-profit org.	74	61	22	163
h.	Bookstores	39	33	18	91
i.	Seminars/workshops	3	6	1	10
j.	Other	28	59	46	134
	No response/miscode	384	650	1015	

Q.17 total includes responses from respondents who provided more than three information sources.

Q.18 Over the last six months, how many books have you read?

Number of respondents = 1395
Mean = 35.85
SD = 50.14
Min = 0
Max = 800

Q.19 Do you read any magazines on a regular basis?

		Frequency	%
a.	Yes	1182	82
b.	No	255	18
	No response or miscode	66	

Q.20 If "yes," which do you regularly read?

		Frequency						
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total
a.	Family life	425	356	278	175	18	8	1220
b.	News	274	153	97	67	10	5	606
c.	Lifestyles	186	208	176	110	7	4	691
d.	Nature	88	93	86	59	15	3	344
e.	Consumer	12	17	11	7	1	1	49
f.	Religion	27	38	30	24	1	2	122
g.	Financial	26	29	29	16	1	0	98
h.	Computers	2	5	6	0	0	1	14

Q.20 Continued

		Frequency						
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total
i.	Hobbies	95	107	112	84	8	10	416
j.	Professional jour.	35	34	27	29	6	1	132
k.	Assn/soc. j.	1	8	2	6	0	1	19
l.	Other	16	21	8	6	0	1	52
	No response	316	437	641	920	1436	1466	

Q.21 Do you belong to any community or social organizations?

		Frequency	%
a.	Yes	759	54
b.	No	654	46
	No response or miscode	90	

Q.22 If you answered "yes," please list the organizations to which you belong.

		Frequency						
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total
a.	Elected/app. local govt.	17	9	2	3	0		31
b.	Church	154	85	50	14	1		304
c.	Civic gr.--multi-purpose	96	54	27	8	2		187
d.	Special int.--single purp.	370	254	123	54	11		812
e.	Youth/children	31	20	5	4	3		63
f.	Lodges/fraternities	58	39	29	7	0		133
g.	Other	8	5	2	1	0		16
	No response	769	1037	1265	1412	1486		

Q.23 Annually, how much would you estimate that your community spends per person to support this library?

		Frequency	%
a.	< $1.00	298	24
b.	$1.00-$1.99	213	18
c.	$2.00-$2.99	245	20
d.	$3.00-$3.99	127	10
e.	More than $4.00	335	28
	No response or miscode	285	

Q.24 Annually, what would you consider to be the ideal level of community support per person for this library?

		Frequency	%
a.	< $1.00	38	3
b.	$1.00-$1.99	94	8
c.	$2.00-$2.99	205	17
d.	$3.00-$3.99	211	17
e.	More than $4.00	695	56
	No response or miscode	260	

Q.25 My occupation is:

		Frequency	%
a.	Professional	334	23
b.	Technical & skilled labor	87	6
c.	Clerical	123	9
d.	Service Worker	55	4
e.	Student	83	6
f.	Homemaker	422	30
g.	Retired	279	19
h.	Laborer	40	3
i.	Other	22	2
	No response or miscode		

Q.26 My age is:

N = 1446
Mean = 45.82
SD = 20.59
Min = 9
Max = unknown

The mean and standard deviation are somewhat inflated, since the analysis indicated that the maximum age was 501.

Q.27 My gender is:

		Frequency	%
a.	Female	1169	79
b.	Male	310	21
	No response or miscode	24	

Q.28 My highest level of schooling is:

		Frequency	%
a.	1-6 grade school	11	1
b.	7-8 jr. high	28	2
c.	9-11 high school	57	4
d.	12 high school grad/G.E.D.	650	45
e.	Tech./trade/business school/A.A.	169	12
f.	B.A./B.S.	368	25
g.	Master's	141	10
h.	Doctorate, M.D., D.V.M., D.D.S.	21	1
i.	Other	5	<1
	No response	53	